

MICHAEL M. HONDA

17TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

1713 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-2631
FAX: (202) 225-2699
<http://www.honda.house.gov>

DISTRICT OFFICE:

900 LAFAYETTE STREET, SUITE 206
SANTA CLARA, CA 95050
PHONE: (408) 436-2720
(855) 680-3759
FAX: (408) 436-2721



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

May 10, 2016

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE,
RANKING MEMBER (ACTING)

ENERGY AND WATER

SENIOR WHIP

CONGRESSIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC
AMERICAN CAUCUS, CHAIR EMERITUS

TRANSGENDER EQUALITY TASK FORCE,
CHAIR

Lauryn Wild
Commission Chair
Instructional Quality Commission
c/o California Department of Education
Curriculum Frameworks & Instructional Resources Division
1430 N Street, Suit 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814

Louis "Bill" Honig,
Chair, Subject Matter Committee
Instructional Quality Commission
c/o California Department of Education
Curriculum Frameworks & Instructional Resources Division
1430 N Street, Suit 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commission Chair Wild and Subject Matter Committee Chair Honig:

I write to express my support for the recent curriculum revision proposed by California Department of Education's Instructional Quality Commission to teach our California students about the history of World War II sex slaves, euphemistically known as "comfort women." I applaud the initial inclusion of the "comfort women" issue in the draft History-Social Science Framework, as part of the world history curriculum for 10th grade students, and now urge the final adoption of this language.

For the past two decades, I have been honored to fight, and be a voice, for the souls of the 200,000 girls and young women throughout the Asia-Pacific, who were kidnapped and sexually enslaved by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II, in what was the largest state-sanctioned, systematic human trafficking in the 20th century. First in the California Assembly, and then in the U.S. House of Representatives, I was the lead author of CA Assembly Joint Resolution 27 and U.S. House Resolution 121. Both resolutions passed, and both sought to bring justice and peace to these sex slaves. Today, the survivors are in their late 80s and 90s, and only a few remain in the world.

As a former high school educator, I know the importance of teaching our future generations the lessons of our history in a clear and unflinching manner. In fact, I was very firm to include the clause in the House Resolution 121, that the Government of Japan should educate their own current and future generations about this horrible crime. Unfortunately, Japan's Ministry of Education has sought to white-wash history. But this is simply wrong.

I have long said the issue of the “comfort women” is not a Korea or Japan issue. It is neither an Asian issue, nor a women’s issue; this is a human rights issue. In fact, from the Yezidi women and girls being sold as sex slaves, to Boko Haram kidnapping 300 young girls, to the Democratic Republic of Congo being called the “rape capitol of the world” – global violence against girls and women continues to happen today.

Whether it is the Holocaust, slavery, the Cold War, or the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as educators, we have a responsibility to present the facts and details of our history – no matter the successes or failures. Only by accurately and unambiguously facing history, can we truly learn from our past.

In this spirit, I urge you to support our students’ opportunity to learn about this shameful, but factual moment in our world history – so that they may learn to fight for the human rights of all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael M. Honda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress